

SENATE—Saturday, May 26, 2001

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CRAIG THOMAS, a Senator from the State of Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The guest Chaplain, Dr. Richard B. Foth, of Falls Church, VA, will lead us in prayer.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Shall we pray.

We stand here today, Almighty God, grateful and humbled. On this Memorial Day weekend, we are awed by the sacrifice of those who have gone before.

In a few hours, our Senators will vote on new tax laws. Debate has been intense, and we are grateful for the right to speak out and fight for opinions, for that freedom has been costly.

It has been bought by the blood of our very best, who often fought and died in lonely places with strange sounding names, far from home and family.

Every one of them counts, and we remember them today.

For the Americans who guard freedom around the world at this moment, we join with those they love—the mother in Seattle, that dad in Wichita, a sister in Mobile—in praying for their safe return.

Every one counts, and we remember them today.

And for the men and women of this United States Senate, who also guard our freedoms, we ask a fresh measure of peace. Pour Your perspective we pray, into the hearts of those here whom You know need it the most.

It is by Your grace that our Senators serve, and we count on that very grace to calm the waters in this place for every Senator has been designed in Your image and their freedom has been bought with a price.

Every one counts, and we remember them today.

We ask these things in the name of the One who calls us to be free. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CRAIG THOMAS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 26, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CRAIG THOMAS, a Senator from the State of Wyoming, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. THOMAS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

EXTENDING OUR SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. LOTT. I extend our special appreciation to our guest Chaplain this morning for the beautiful and most appropriate prayer. We are delighted to have Dr. Foth here.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. It is Saturday, May 26, Memorial Day weekend, a special weekend for recognizing those who have sacrificed so much for our country. The Chaplain is right: Everyone does count. That is why Senators are here. We are doing the American people's business. Later on today we hope to complete action on a very significant piece of legislation, tax relief for all Americans.

The Senate will be in a short period of morning business awaiting the conference report to accompany the tax reconciliation bill.

I see Senator SPECTER is in the Chamber ready to speak in morning business. The House is currently voting on the conference report. Therefore, we expect to receive the papers shortly. When the papers arrive, it is hoped that we can enter into a short time agreement so that a final vote can be set. I have already spoken briefly to

Senator DASCHLE, and we will be working together to get an agreement on a reasonable period of time for debate. Of course, we will try to accommodate Senators who will be coming in and others who will be wanting to leave. We do plead with all Senators to give us your best measure of cooperation because we are trying to be sensitive to all kinds of special events, including graduation ceremonies and weddings and commitments of longstanding. It is not always easy to accommodate them all. I know some Senators are agitated that they have already been inconvenienced, and for that we apologize. But I commend the leadership on both sides of the aisle. We have said to each other, let's stay; let's get this done; and we are going to do that. We will notify the Senators as soon as an agreement can be entered into as to the time sequence. We are hoping we can get something that could get to a vote either before noon or hopefully by 1 o'clock. That is not agreed to, by any means, but that is the goal we are pursuing.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 10 minutes.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

SENATOR JEFFORDS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition this morning to comment on Senator JEFFORDS' announcement that he will vote with the Democrats on organization of the Senate. I have delayed in expressing these thoughts to further reflect upon them and perhaps avoid saying something that I would later regret. I have written them down, which is unusual for me because I believe that floor statements, as speeches generally, are best made from the heart rather than text.

When I first heard last Tuesday that Senator JEFFORDS was considering this move, I told the news media: "It shouldn't happen—it won't happen—it can't happen." Well, I was wrong.

When Senator JEFFORDS confirmed that he was about to vote with the Democrats, I joined five other Senators who tried to dissuade him in a morning meeting last Wednesday. The group reconvened for an afternoon meeting, with some ten other Senators and Senator JEFFORDS. Between the two meetings, we conferred with the Republican